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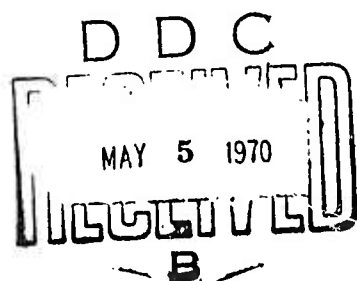
CRITICAL COMBAT PERFORMANCES,
KNOWLEDGES, AND SKILLS REQUIRED OF THE
INFANTRY RIFLE PLATOON LEADER

Squad Formations, Battle Drill, and
Elementary Fire and Maneuver

by
Arthur J. DeLuca and George J. Magner

11 June 1968

The George Washington University
HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH OFFICE
operating under contract with
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



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Work Unit LEAD: Work Sub-Unit I

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HumRRO Division No. 4
(Infantry)

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FOREWORD

Work Unit LEAD has as its objective the improvement of officer training in the critical skills required for effective combat leadership in small infantry platoons, and is being conducted by the Human Resources Research Office at Fort Benning, Georgia, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Continental Army Command.

In Sub-Unit I, performances, knowledges, and skills required of the leader of an infantry rifle platoon are being identified and categorized according to 41 comprehensive subject areas. This document details the requirements in the area of squad formations, battle drill, and elementary fire and maneuver.

The LEAD research is being performed at HumRRO Division No. 4 (Infantry), Fort Benning, Georgia. The present Director of Research of the Division is Dr. T. O. Jacobs, who is also the Work Unit Leader. Dr. Carl J. Lange was the Director of Research when the research was begun.

Military support for the study was provided by the U.S. Army Infantry Human Research Unit, Fort Benning, Georgia. LTC Chester I. Christie, Jr. is the present Unit Chief.

HumRRO research is conducted under Army Contract DA 44-188-ARO-2 and under Army Project 2J024701A712 01, Training, Motivation, and Leadership Research.

Meredith P. Crawford
Director
Human Resources Research Office

SQUAD FORMATIONS, BATTLE DRILL, AND ELEMENTARY FIRE AND MANEUVER

General Considerations

Introduction

In combat, a unit is often surprised or faced with unexpected opportunity. In each situation, the unit must be able to act quickly. In combat, as in football, the best results are obtained by having a few alternatives to choose from and then selecting the one the enemy least expects. To do this, the leader must have prearranged procedures (or plays) at his finger tips which are well understood by all. A leader would be greatly handicapped if he did not have these well-rehearsed plays. He would be in the helpless position of having to create plays "in the huddle."

Scope

This paper covers fire team and squad formations, the application of effective fire and maneuver with a minimum of orders from leaders, and the proficiency the platoon leader must demand from his squad leaders, fire team leaders, and fire team members during tactical operations.

Closely related material is presented in the papers on Mounted and Dismounted Platoon Combat Formations; Patrolling; Mission, Organization and General Operation of the Rifle Platoon; Tactical Movement; and Technique of Fire of the Rifle Squad.

Materiel

All TOE and special equipment comprising the combat load for the Infantry Rifle and Weapons Squad.

Battlefield Cues

Orders and instructions from commanders.

Receipt of combat intelligence reports from higher echelons; attached, supporting, or adjacent units; or any other reliable agency.

Hostile targets or the indications of existence of hostile targets, including suspected positions and possible ambush sites.

Receipt of fire from the enemy.

Detection of significant sounds and odors indicating possible enemy activity.

Recognition of fields of fire and observation, concealment and cover, obstacles, key terrain, and avenue of approach likely to affect the mission.

Discovery of significant differences in observed terrain as compared to impressions gained from map study during planning.

Observed weather conditions or the perception of indications of changes in weather conditions, visibility, or tide levels likely to affect human performance, movement of surface vehicles or aircraft, the control of weapons and fires or the functioning of weapons, equipment or ammunition.

Receipt of pertinent weather forecasts, light data, tide tables, etc.

Performances, Knowledges, and Skills

1. THE IRPL MAY SPECIFY THE INITIAL SQUAD COMBAT FORMATION WHEN THE SQUAD MOVES AS PART OF THE PLATOON.

He must	: know that the rifle squad is organized into two fire teams called ALFA and BRAVO.	1
	: know the rifle squad combat formations are the squad file, squad column, and squad line.	2
	: know that the squad column is the basic formation from which the others are derived.	3
	: know that when the weapons squad moves as part of the platoon, it usually moves in squad column formation.	4
	: understand that the squad leader places himself within the formation where he can best exercise control.	5
	: know that the fire team leaders place themselves in the designated formations as directed by the squad leader.	6
	: recognize that the squad leader controls the squad by oral commands, audible battlefield signals, arm-and-hand signals, and through his fire team leaders.	7
	: appreciate that changes in the situation and terrain may cause the squad leader to alter the initial formation.	8
	: appreciate that distances between men within a formation vary, depending upon visibility and terrain.	9
	: understand that while maximum dispersion is desirable to reduce vulnerability to direct and indirect fires, effective control must be maintained.	10
	: know that when visibility is good, formations are more dispersed.	11
	: know that during conditions of reduced visibility or in close terrain, distances between men are reduced.	12
	: know that changing from one combat formation to another is accomplished without halting the squad.	13

He will	: know that the squad column is the primary formation for movement.	14
	: recognize that the squad column provides good dispersion laterally and in depth without sacrificing control.	15
	: know that from the squad column a large volume of fire can be delivered to the flanks but only a limited amount to the front.	16
	: understand that the squad column is a flexible formation which facilitates battle drill.	17
He must	: know that the squad may move with fire teams in column or fire teams abreast and that these formulations may be modified to provide greater dispersion, all-round security, and increased fire power to the front.	18
	: recognize that when the fire teams are in column, the squad enjoys all-round security, also control and the use of battle drill are facilitated.	19
	: know that the squad column with fire teams in column is used most frequently in areas where maneuver of the rear (trailing) fire team is unrestricted.	20
	: know that the fire teams in column may be closed or the rear team may follow at a specified distance.	21
	: understand that the squad column may be modified by the squad leader as necessary to conform to the terrain, and to provide a greater capability to deliver fire immediately to either the front or rear.	22
	: appreciate that when the fire teams are abreast, the formation provides for all-round security, facilitates deployment of the squad on each side of a road, and is used most frequently on a road or trail.	23
	: appreciate that the squad column with fire teams abreast is for movement in areas where maneuver of the fire teams is restricted.	24
	: know that the squad line is the basic assault formation of the squad and provides for the delivery of maximum fires to the front.	25
	: know that in the assault, the squad leader designates a base fire team, usually the team that has been leading.	26

	: understand that the squad line is difficult to control.	27
	: know that the squad line is also used to cross roads, trails, or short open areas.	28
He will	: know that the squad file is commonly used in dense terrain and reduced visibility when speed and control are essential.	29
	: understand that the squad file affords maximum firepower to the flanks, limited firepower to front and rear.	30
	: recognize that deployment of the squad to the front or rear from the squad file formation is not as easy as from the squad column.	31
2.	THE IRPL WILL OBSERVE AND CONTROL HIS SQUADS DURING TACTICAL OPERATIONS.	
He must	: place himself where he can best observe and control his squads.	32
	: know that squad leaders are located within their squad formations where they can best exercise control.	33
	: understand that hesitancy of a squad leader to order formation changes or hesitancy of men to respond to a signal for a formation change indicates a need for additional training.	34
	: know that the use of battle drill facilitates changes to a more effective formation without delay or detailed instructions.	35
	: know that when deployment is demanded by unanticipated enemy action, it must occur on signal or in response to a battlefield cue without delay or confusion.	36
	: seek to deploy his squads in defilade or concealment when the situation will permit.	37
He will	: know that when enemy small arms fire is encountered during movement aggressive application of SOP battle drill should be almost a reflex action on the part of the leading fire teams.	38

- : know that movement forward by the lead elements of the squads must be covered by fire when effective enemy fire is received or when it is apparent that it may be received. 39
- : know that when a squad is moving as a leading element, an excellent method of providing security is by having fire teams move by bounds with one fire team always in position to cover the movement of the other. 40
3. THE IRPL WILL EMPLOY FIRE AND MOVEMENT/MANEUVER TO ASSIST IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS MISSION.
- He must : know that "fire and maneuver" is the term used when one element provides supporting fire while another element closes with and assaults the enemy. 41
- : understand that in contrast to fire and maneuver when an element moves within itself by having some individuals fire while others advance and then reverses the roles, the action is called "fire and movement." 42
- : appreciate that fire and maneuver will often be used when a concealed or covered route to the objective is available. 43
- : when no covered or concealed route to the objective is available, fire and movement may be necessary. 44
- : know that teams of buddy pairs are formed so that fire and movement may be employed by two men. 45
- He will : understand that in executing fire and maneuver when the maneuvering element can no longer move forward under cover of planned supporting fire without taking unacceptable losses, it may employ fire and movement to continue the advance. 46
4. THE IRPL WILL EMPLOY BATTLE DRILL TO ASSIST IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS MISSION.
- He must : realize that in combat, a unit is often surprised or faced with unexpected opportunity. In each situation, his unit must be able to act quickly. 47
- : know that battle drill has been developed to enable his squad leaders to react quickly by giving a simple command. 48

	: know that two elements, a fire support element and a maneuver element, are used in battle drill.	49
	: understand that battle drill is employed, utilizing part of the unit to fire on the enemy while the balance maneuvers under cover of this fire. Thus the two groups execute fire and maneuver.	50
He will	: understand that the primary mission of the fire support element is to deliver fire on the enemy, but it also moves closer to the enemy if it can do so without reducing the volume of fire.	51
	: know that members of the fire support element may move forward by individual rushes to more favorable firing positions if this can be done without reducing the volume of fire.	52
	: recognize that the fire support element must cease firing when the fires are masked by the maneuver element.	53
	: know that when fires are masked, the fire support element moves forward to assist in consolidation or to join the assault with the maneuver element.	54
He must	: know that the role of the maneuver element is to close with and destroy or capture the enemy.	55
	: understand that while the maneuver element for a squad is normally a fire team, smaller or larger elements may be used.	56
	: know that the maneuver element advances by fire team movement, fire and movement within the team, or creeping and crawling, depending upon the terrain, and effectiveness of the supporting fire.	57
	: understand that in fire team movement, the entire team moves as a unit. This type of movement might be used when the unit is not under effective fire.	58
	: know that when the maneuver element advances by creeping and crawling the movement may be made by the entire team as a unit or by individuals or pairs, depending upon the situation.	59

	: know that, depending on the effectiveness of enemy fires from the objective, the maneuver element may use creeping and crawling to reach a point where assault fire techniques may be employed.	60
	: know that when the maneuver element moves by fire and movement within the fire team the men move individually.	61
	: know that buddy pairs may be used in fire and movement within the fire team with two men alternately firing and moving.	62
	: recognize that if terrain and supporting fire permit, the maneuver element may be able to move within hand grenade range, grenade the objective, and then assault the enemy.	63
He will	: understand that the assault is conducted at maximum feasible speed to reduce vulnerability to enemy fire.	64
	: appreciate that if the maneuver element comes under casualty-producing fire, it must attempt to continue the advance by fire and movement.	65
	: know that if the enemy prevents further advance of the maneuver element, the squad leader may reverse the roles of the battle drill elements, thus making the maneuver element the fire support element.	66
	: know that in executing battle drill, control of the squad is maintained by the squad leader with the assistance of the two fire team leaders.	67
	: know that the chain of command in squad battle drill runs down from the squad leader through the fire team leaders to designated members of the fire teams.	68
He must	: understand that when the squad is brought under effective small arms fire, the men must immediately, without order, return the fire.	69
	: know that members of the leading fire team upon receiving enemy fire move up by individual rushes or creeping and crawling to positions generally abreast of their fire team leader and attempt to gain fire superiority.	70
	: appreciate the fact that to gain fire superiority, the fire team must use all fire support available, including automatic weapons, hand grenades, and grenade launchers.	71

	: recognize that if one of the two fire teams is insufficient to gain fire superiority, both teams may be used.	72
	: know that if both fire teams must be used to obtain and maintain fire superiority, movement is by individual rushes or by creeping and crawling.	73
He will	: know that the squad leader must decide on a course of action and gain fire superiority before maneuvering.	74
	: know that when fire superiority is gained it must be maintained to prevent the enemy from recovering and delivering effective fire.	75
He must	: understand that there are three basic battle drill actions--maneuver left, maneuver right, and maneuver front.	76
	: know that the maneuver used in a particular situation is decided upon by the squad leader.	77
	: know that execution for all squad formations is accomplished by the appropriate signal from the squad leader.	78
	: know that to best control and influence the action, the squad leader usually advances with the maneuver element.	79
	: understand that when executing maneuver right from the various squad formations, the maneuver element moves around to the right of the objective while the support element provides the necessary fire support.	80
	: know that the signal for maneuver right is the clenched fist thrust out in the direction of maneuver.	81
	: understand that maneuver left is accomplished by the maneuver element circling to its left; the signal this time is the clenched fist thrust out to the left, the desired direction of maneuver.	82
	: know that maneuver front is used to form the basic assault formation and that from this formation individual or fire team fire and movement may be employed part or all of the way to the objective.	83

: know that in executing maneuver front, the maneuver element must be careful not to mask the fires of the fire support element. 84

: know that fire and movement can be easily executed from the squad line formation with fire teams or individuals alternately acting as the movement and fire support elements depending on the terrain and enemy dispositions. 85

: understand that maneuver right (left) can be executed from the squad file formation in the same way as it is executed from the squad column fire teams abreast formation. 87

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13. ABSTRACT This document is one of a series of research by-products that details the critical skills, knowledges, and performances the infantry rifle platoon leader must possess for effective individual and unit combat performance. The overall goal of the research is to improve officer training in these critical combat skill areas necessary for effective leadership. This document concerns the critical skill requirements in the area of squad formations, battle drill, and elementary fire and maneuver.			

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Combat

Infantry

Leader

Maneuver

Platoon

Squad Formations

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